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CHAPTER III

OVERT SOCIAL ORGANISATION

THE SMALL ISLANDS AS A CULTURAL UNIT

IN the brief survey contained in the last chapter, we met with several factors of sociological significance:

The division of the island into two unequal Sides.

The fact that the six Vao villages, each with its own dancing-ground, are paired in such a way as to form three double-villages, one double-village on one Side of the Island and two double-villages on the other.

Sex dichotomy as one of the means by which the men maintain a position of ritual superiority over the women.

The existence of a central village men's House (*ghamal*) and of Family-Lodges (*na-tamp*) surrounded by the family cemeteries, into which women not born in the village may never enter and those born in the village may enter only on stated occasions.

(Godefroy also reports the existence of special Lodges in which women give birth to children and to which men have no access.)

In order properly to understand the meaning of these phenomena it is necessary first to examine the social organisation of Vao not as a unit in itself, but as part of the larger unit formed by the Small Islands as a whole.

Despite considerable differences in language, in the regulation of kinship and in ritual, and the not infrequent wars that break out between them, the inhabitants of all these and of the adjacent promontories recognise a common cultural bond. There is, however, no political cohesion. Nor, in the absence of chiefs, is there any centralised form of control or common action.

Within this cultural unit the inhabitants of each island and promontory included in it may severally be spoken of as constituting a "tribe" in the commonly accepted sense that they inhabit a definite locality, speak a common language, have a common name for themselves, and in spite of intermarriage exhibit a sense of solidarity which expresses itself in regarding other people as strangers,[1] though in no case does the population

[1] The only possible exception to this is that of Wala and Rano, which lie very close to one another and in some respects act as a single unit.

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There is in fact only one village on Vao which, owing to its alleged foundation by the sky-deity Ta-ghar, is said by the natives to have an internal organisation which is, as they put it, "straight," or as we should say, "perfect." This is the village of Pete-hul on the Superior Side of the Island. It was therefore to this village and its offshoot Togh-vanu that I turned my attention, and to which the following description applies. As will be seen, of the two villages composing this Side of the Island, it is in fact only the parent-village of Pete-hul that lives up to this reputation for perfection, the offshoot village of Togh-vanu failing to be completely perfect, for reasons which will be apparent when we come to study the kinship system.

Quarters and "Quarter-Lodges."

In the "perfect" village of Pete-hul, each of the two unnamed moieties called "Sides of the Stone" is further divided into two sub-moieties called *bang-ne-im*. The word *ne-im* means "house" or "group of houses," and, as the word implies, each of the four patrilineal sub-clans thus formed occupies a given district in the village, corresponding literally to the four "Quarters" of a town (see Map IV). I did not enquire at the time into the meaning of the first syllable of the term, *bang*, but it is probably identical with the word *na-mbange* meaning "banyan tree." These trees have a semi-sacred character, and it is possible that the numerous banyan trees found throughout the island were at one time associated with the "Quarters" of villages.

Each Quarter centres round a large building, sacred to men, called *na-tamp*. These *na-tamp* are smaller than the village *ghamal*, but much larger than the dwelling-houses. Of the word *na-tamp*, *na-* is the indefinite article, and the essential syllable is *tamp*, one of the many Malekulan variants of the Austronesian word of which the best-known form is the Polynesian *tabu*, meaning sacred. Each *na-tamp* is situated immediately alongside the cemetery in which the oldest and most honoured members of the male section of the Quarter in question, those called *mer-sean*,[1] or "greybeards," are buried. It is to these cemeteries that the word *tamp*, "sacred," really refers. The corresponding word in Atchin is *la-tap*, meaning both cemetery and its accompanying building. In each case the close association between the two is shown by a high wall enclosing both building and cemetery, as well as an open space before the former which serves as a common meeting-ground for the male members of the Quarter. Inside this building and on the open space before it the most important affairs affecting the whole Quarter are discussed. Here the main rites in honour of the dead take place, and the communion feasts are held. No women are admitted save when invited, with the exception of certain occasions when the female patrilineal relatives of the deceased

[1] See p. 531.

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571 (i.e. the sisters and daughters, but never their mothers or wives) come to perform their part in mortuary ritual.

On ordinary occasions, this is the general meeting- and eating-place of men. Here the still living "greybeards" of the Quarter sometimes sleep, as on occasion may also such unmarried youths as have not yet constructed houses for themselves, or married men when they so wish.

Each *na-tamp* has its own distinctive name,[1] which is applied not only to the cemetery and its accompanying building, and to the enclosure surrounding them, but is used also as a collective name for all members of the Quarter to which it belongs, as well as to the village land[2] they own.

It is one of the principles of this work to avoid needless and confusing repetition of native terms, by finding English equivalents where possible. With regard to the secular aspect of the *na-tamp* as a general meeting-place for men, the hackneyed word "club-house" would serve. It will be clear, however, that the ordinary connotations of this word are very far from embracing the religious concepts which underlie the native term, and with no stretch of the imagination could the word "club-house" be made to include, as does the native term, also those members of the population who use it. I therefore propose to adopt the term "Lodge," which, like the native term, applies both to a closed community and to the building in which its members meet, and at the same time bears a similar semi-secret and religious connotation.

Since there is yet another type of Lodge to be considered, I will refer to those which have just been described as Quarter-Lodges.

"Sides of the Lodge."

We have not yet reached the end of the progressive sub-divisions into which the community is split up. For each of the above-mentioned Quarters is yet further divided into two lesser moieties called *tosan na-tamp*, "Sides of the Lodge." These, like the Sides of the dancing-ground (see p. 34), are divided into Upper and Lower, namely *tosan a-ul* and *tosan a-tan*, meaning literally "Superior" and "Inferior." Each of these Lodge moieties has its own lesser Lodge building, also called *na-tamp*. As is the case with the Quarter-Lodges, the word *na-tamp* is used to refer not only to the Lodge and to the cemetery round it, but also to the group of individuals who use it. Each "Side of the Lodge" has its own individual name.

The "Side of the Lodge" represents the smallest cohesive group outside the biological family unit. Its cemetery is reserved for all those belonging to the age and rank entitling those who have reached them to be called *na-humbe*, the usual respectful title for "old man."[3] These two

[1] See p. 67.
[2] As opposed to garden land.
[3] See p. 530.

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"Sides of the Lodge" are the meeting- and eating-places for all except the very oldest members of the Quarter.

That these "Sides of the Lodge" are definitely regarded as offshoots from the Quarter-Lodge, which is the main family division, is clear from the fact that in all ceremonial distributions of food the ritual phraseology is not that one set of yams is provided for each "Side of the Lodge," but that "two sets of yams" are given to each Quarter, the Quarter itself only being recognised by the general community and the division into "Sides of the Lodge" being regarded as a domestic affair within the Quarter.[1]

Members of a given "Side of the Lodge" refer to those of the other "Side of the Lodge" in the same Quarter simply as "*tosan*," "Side," or, more specifically, *tosan a-ul* or *tosan a-tan*, "Superior or Inferior Side." When it is necessary, for the sake of strangers, to be yet more specific, the name of the "Side of the Lodge" is added.

Togh-vanu had originally only two Quarters, but now has three.

Such is the internal organisation of Pete-hul, superior or parent partner of the double-village of Pete-hul–Togh-vanu, which occupies the best side of the island. When we come to examine the organisation of its inferior or offshoot twin-village Togh-vanu, we find that, though composed of the same types of unit, these are arranged differently, and differ also in number. Thus:

(*a*) Instead of having four Quarters, Togh-vanu has only three, each with its own named Quarter-Lodge. It is important to note, moreover, as will be seen later, that there were originally only two Quarters, and that the third Quarter is of comparatively recent origin.[2]

(*b*) Instead of the two moieties called "Sides of the Lodge" into which each Quarter is divided, each having its own Lodge building, there is only one such "Side of the Lodge" building in each Quarter, and this building belongs to the Inferior "Side of the Lodge" while the Superior "Side of the Lodge" uses the Quarter-Lodge as its Lodge building.

These deviations from the theoretically "perfect" pattern of social organisation in Togh-vanu are put down by the natives to the fact that whereas Pete-hul with its perfect organisation was founded by Ta-ghar, Togh-vanu with its imperfect organisation was founded by mere man, and is therefore "all in a muddle."

What this phrase means we shall find out when we come to examine the creation myth and the formation of the kinship system.[3]

[1] See p. 303. Evidence cited below (pp. 156, 168) suggests a possible reason for this, namely that the two "Sides of the Lodge" may possibly be composed respectively of the members of the two matrilineal moieties within the Quarter.

[2] See pp. 91, 95.

[3] See Chapter VI.

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Social Organisation illustrated by means of Sketch-map and Diagrams

Fig. 4 presents in diagrammatic form the existing social organisation of the island into successive moieties and sub-moieties.

In Table I the same diagram is presented in horizontal form, giving the names of the named moieties. In the double-village of Pete-hul–Togh-

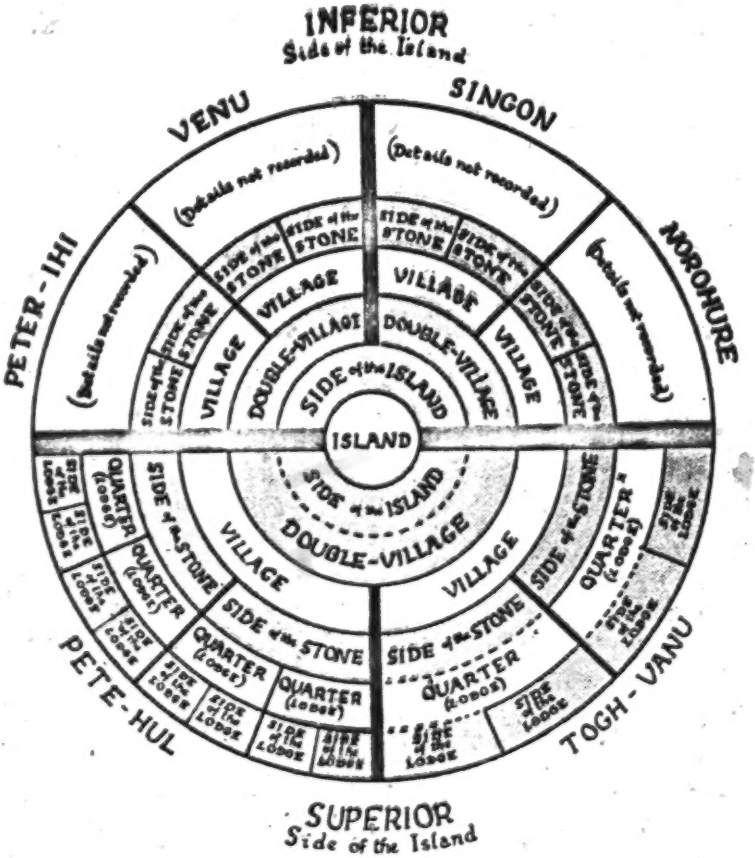

Fig. 4. Diagram illustrating the Overt Social Organisation of Vao.

Moieties known as "sides" (*tasan*), including unnamed double-villages, shaded. Names of villages outside the diagram.

* For subsequent development of this Quarter, see Table I and pp. 91 ff.

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Island	Side of the Island (*tasa*)	Double-Village	Single-(Twin) Village	Side of the Stone (*tasan na-ruta*)	Quarter (*hang-na-ia*) Quarter-Lodges called *na-hang*	"Side of the Lodge" (*tasan na-hang*)
named	unnamed	unnamed	named	unnamed	named	named
VAO	SUPERIOR SIDE	Double-village	Pete-hul (parent)	Side of the Stone 1	*La-mbarang* A¹	*Mbis* *Lok-na-nale*
					La-mbet-ra B¹	*Na-tasa* *Tasan na-hul*
				Side of the Stone 2	*La-mbet-na-ninge* A²	*La-nale-tuaiku* *La-tasi-wul-ghaghor*
					Nahi B²	*La-tasi-kakar-nut* *La-mbet-pang*
			Togh-vanu (offshoot)	Side of the Stone 1 (with only one Quarter)	*La-mat-na-maki* B¹	(Uses Quarter-Lodge) *La-nag-nag*
				Side of the Stone 2 (originally with only one Quarter)	*Holoron* B²	(Uses Quarter-Lodge) *La-limap*
					↓ *La-mbang-ne-ne-lini* (Recent offshoot from Holoron)	(Uses Quarter-Lodge) *Peter-ihi*
	INFERIOR SIDE	Double-village	Peter-ihi (parent)	Each with two Sides of the Stone	(Further details not recorded)	
			Venu (offshoot)			
		Double-village	Singon (parent)			
			Norohure (offshoot)			

TABLE I

Table of Overt Social Organisation on Vao.

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vanu the Sides of the Stone are numbered 1 and 2 to demonstrate the fact that, though these moieties appear separately in each village, their appearance is in fact due to two moieties running through the whole kinship organisation. So also the two Quarters in each Side of the Stone in Pete-hul are lettered A and B to show that these also are due to yet another pair of moieties forming an essential part of the kinship system, as will be shown in the next chapter dealing with the native accounts of the origin of this village.

In the brief time available to me on Vao, I was able to make only a rough sketch of the central part of Pete-hul and Togh-vanu on the Superior Side of the Island, together with a few of the adjacent house plots of Peter-ihi on the Inferior Side. From the resulting sketch-map (Map IV) a number of salient facts emerge.

Sides of the Island.

In the first place, it will be noticed that the division between the two Sides of the Island, far from going across waste ground, such as is plentifully available on the island, is, where it approaches the dancing-grounds, actually the most populous street on the island, faced on both sides by house-enclosures, those on the west belonging to Togh-vanu and those on the east to Peter-ihi. Thus, in spite of the traditional enmity existing between the two Sides of the Island, the rival habitations approach one another as close as they possibly can. This significant fact will be fully discussed when we come to the subject of warfare,[1] and is only mentioned here in order to call attention to the fact that warfare, so prominent in the eyes of Europeans, who treat it as synonymous with enmity, is to the native but one out of a number of institutions having as their effect the stimulation of one group over against the other by means of a creative rivalry which is by no means confined to hostility but in fact permeates every aspect of social and ritual life.

The Four Quarters of Pete-hul.

In the second place, it demonstrates more clearly than any description the topographical arrangement of the 4 Quarters in the village of Pete-hul, which is the only "perfectly" organised village on the island. Thus, while tabulated in terms of moieties the 4 Quarters appear as in Fig. 5, in actual practice it will be noticed that these four Quarters are ranged round the dancing-ground in such a way that the two Quarters belonging to moiety A (including the founder's Quarter *La-mbarang* (A^1))[2] are both ranged behind the Upper (or men's) Side, while the two Quarters

[1] See Chapter XXIII.
[2] For foundation see pp. 36, 87.

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MAP IV

Central Region of the Double-village of Pete-hul–Togh-vanu on the Superior Side of Vao.
Note the 4 Quarters of Pete-hul, A^1, A^2, B^1, B^2.

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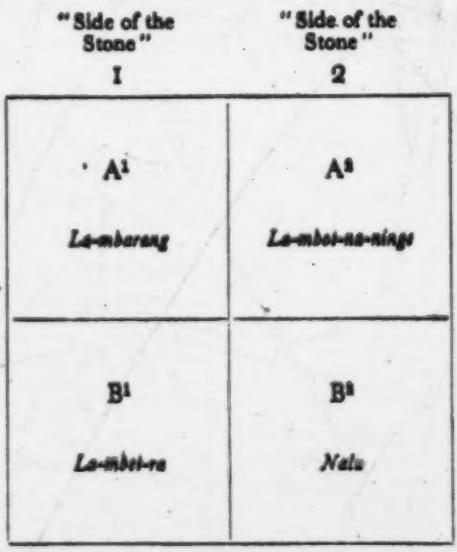

FIG. 5

Diagram illustrating the functions of the four Quarters of Pete-hul in terms of moieties. 1 and 2 represent the two "Sides of the Stone," each of which is divided into A and B.

belonging to molety B are ranged behind the Lower (or women's) Side as in Fig. 6.

This arrangement has the result of dividing each Side of the Stone into two parts in such a way that the two Quarters of a given Side of the Stone are not contiguous, but occupy positions diametrically opposite to one another. Thus the Quarter *La-mbarang* (A¹) occupies the south-western quarter of the village,[1] while the Quarter *La-mbot-ra* (B¹), though belonging to the same Side of the Stone (1), occupies the north-eastern quarter diametrically opposite to it. In the same way the Quarter *La-mbot-na-ninge* (A²) occupies the north-western quarter, and *Nalu* (B²), though on the same Side of the Stone (2), occupies the south-eastern quarter.

One of the virtues in this arrangement, as in so many Small Island institutions, is that, whatever rivalries develop between the members of any given group, there is bound at the same time to be a counter or

[1] The Quarter-Lodge building of *La-mbarang* was, through inadvertence, not marked on the map, but its two "Sides of the Lodge," *Mole* and *Lok-na-vale*, serve to show in which direction it lies.

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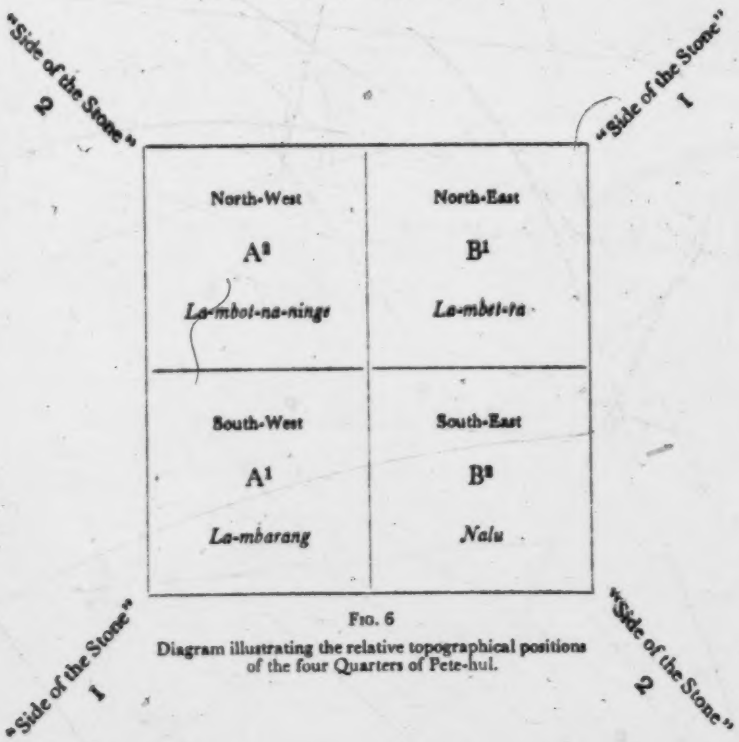

FIG. 6

Diagram illustrating the relative topographical positions of the four Quarters of Pete-hul.

moderating pull in the opposite direction owing to mutually opposing loyalties. For, just as each Side of the Stone is geographically divided into two parts which could not join forces without encountering opposition on either flank, so also the two moieties A and B, though each forming a cohesive bloc, are apt to find aggression difficult owing to the fact that each contains a section of one Side of the Stone having friends and allies in the other.

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Owing to the inadequacies of my sketch-map, the exact boundaries of the Quarters are not shown, but we have it in the words of Godefroy that "Each group of families (i.e. each Quarter) builds its houses parallel to those of its neighbouring group, leaving between them a space about two metres wide. The families surround their houses . . . with high palisades called *bakral*, giving them the aspect of fortresses. These palisades are in addition reinforced at the base with walls made of dry stones a metre or more high. The result of this is that the establishments of

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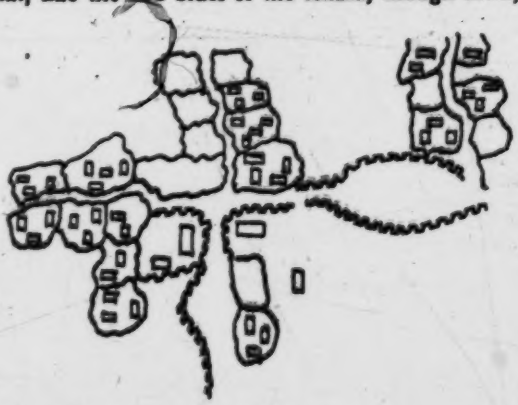
two groups of families built parallel to one another and enclosed and surrounded by walls combine to form a long and more or less tortuous street not unlike those of ancient villages in Europe." [1]. This aspect of town-planning on Vao is illustrated also in the rough plan drawn by Speiser reproduced in Map V. Godefroy does not discuss the details of social organisation, nor does he mention the existence of Quarters as social institutions, though he is sufficiently struck by the appearance of the houses to say that they resemble the "quarters" [2] of a town. I quote his remarks here not only because they could not be bettered as a description of what an observant visitor actually sees, but in order to emphasise the fact that, like the two Sides of the Island, though always potential



MAP V

Adapted from Speiser's rough plan of Pete-hul including parts of Togh-vanu and Peter-ihi (Speiser, 3, Plate 10, No. 6), showing arrangement of house-enclosures.

rivals, and even on occasion enemies, the Quarters do actually approach one another as close as they can in virtue of the collaboration which underlies all rivalry.

One further fact, not very well illustrated in either sketch-plan, is the process of decentralisation that is apt to take place in all Small Island villages. Thus the central part of the village, as witnessed particularly by the now disused cemeteries of *La-mbet-ra* and *La-mbet-pung*, used to be thickly populated, each cemetery having its own Lodge with the

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, p. 36. He adds that the place where the four streets meet is called *gamul*. In most villages, such as Pete-hul, the *gamul* is obscured by other topographical features. The best example is in the village of Norohure.

[2] Godefroy used this term, as he thought, in a purely figurative sense, as it is used nowadays in Europe, not realising that the Quarters are actualities in Pete-hul. The European use of the term recalls the fact that Quarters were once actualities in Europe too.

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dwelling-enclosures of the Lodge members clustered close around. As the cemeteries where old men are buried increased in size, and as, moreover, the number of burials of young men, women and children inside their dwelling-houses grew also, the original sites tended to be abandoned and new Lodges and cemeteries (such as that of the existing *La-mbst-ra* shown on the plan), as well as new dwelling-houses, began to be built rather further afield. This tendency has not, however, reached the point achieved in the Atchin double-village of Ruruar, which, as will be shown in a later volume, has now become so decentralised that the dwelling-enclosures form a kind of irregular ring round the site of the original village, which is now occupied exclusively by the cemeteries with their accompanying Lodges.

Women's Lodges

While the above account refers almost exclusively to the overt patrilineal organisation of the island, it is of interest to note the existence at the same time of Women's Lodges recorded by Godefroy on Vao, but not existing, so far as I know, elsewhere in the Small Islands.

Referring to a "large carefully guarded enclosure at the base of a slope" in which there are "five or six houses, well kept and with the ground around them carefully cleaned and even swept," Godefroy says: [1] "This collection of houses so carefully fenced . . . is strictly reserved for women. It is there that the matrons of Pete-hul and of Togh-vanu receive women of these same clans when they are about to give birth. The midwife of these two clans is assisted by their close relatives,[2] and together they give, or rather lavish care upon them over a period of three weeks. At the end of this time the mother or the grandmother of the woman who has given birth to the child comes, with other relatives, to take away the mother and her baby and bring them back to her own home." Thus "women also have places which are taboo to men. It is a fact that no men are allowed within this enclosure, and, I may add, only such women as have themselves been born there have the right of entry. A mother who has given birth there, but was not herself born there, is rigorously excluded excepting during the period of her confinement. It is for this reason that the place is called 'the birth enclosure,' [3] *hu ni-ar na woruan*. . . . It is quite simply a native lying-in ward." [4]

Special interest attaches to the name by which this enclosure is called. The term *hu ni-ar* is in fact composed of two words, *hu* which I have recorded in Vao as *hu-hu*, meaning "to suckle" or "to be suckled," [5] and *ni-ar* meaning "a fence." *Woruan* is clearly another spelling for the word

[1] Godefroy, 1, 1933, p. 230.
[2] Presumably of the women in labour.
[3] "*Enclos de la naissance.*"
[4] "*Maternité.*"
[5] See p. 178. Compare Mota *hu-hu*, "to give suck."

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721 sections of Small Island society and liable at any time to be fanned into flame.

In doing this, it must be pointed out that it is necessary always to make a clear distinction between immediate causes of war and the more fundamental social antagonisms. As I have said, the immediate causes are, as a rule, adultery, elopement and theft. Such matters in our society might lead to individual vengeance or litigation, but would not involve whole communities. The reason for this is that our society is no longer founded on kinship, this factor having lost much of its weight owing to the size of the communities we live in and a large number of other factors. Among most primitive communities, however, kinship is sociologically of fundamental importance, extending its influence in the case of the Small Islands not only over all aspects of this life, but also over the next, since kinship considerations are the chief factor in determining the action of ghosts in relation to their living survivors.

Superior and Inferior Sides of all Islands Linked respectively to Form Hostile Moieties

616 In the Small Islands by far the most important aspect of kinship as regards its influence on warfare is the division of each island, both •571 geographically and socially, into two Sides mutually dependent on one another but permanently hostile. This dual division has a much deeper 578 psychological import than is at first sight apparent. In the first place, while the inhabitants of each island recognise their solidarity by having a common name,[1] thus showing their conscious attitude as members of a single community, the Sides of each Island are in most cases unnamed, indicating the deeply unconscious nature of the forces at work between them. In the second place, each Side of each Island has special relations with certain of the villages on the adjacent Malekulan mainland which make them natural allies in case of war, and in all my records of fighting between the Small Islanders and their mainland neighbours there is no case in which the whole of any one island has taken up arms together, but on the contrary each such war has been waged by the members of one Side of the Island only, without help from the other.[2]

Yet further, we have already seen how each island has a geographically smaller but socially "Superior" Side owning the best beach facing the mainland, and a geographically larger but socially "Inferior" Side facing the open sea.[3] What I have not previously pointed out, however,

[1] For example, *To Vao*, the people of Vao; *To Tsan*, the people of Atchin; *To Wala*, the people of Wala; and so on.

[2] Thus, in the account given on pp. 608-12 it is the Superior Side of Vao only, unassisted by the Inferior Side, that is engaged.

[3] See p. 55.

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is the fact that the names of the parent village on the "Superior" Side of each Island are similar. Thus Pete-hul on Vao, Pweter-tsŭts on Atchin and Pwe-lut on Wala have somewhat similar names each beginning with what is philologically the same syllable, in each case meaning "stone" or "stones," and regard themselves as forming a kind of aristocracy, while the names of the villages on the Inferior Sides differ considerably [1] and have less sense of solidarity among themselves. Moreover, in any war taking place between any two of the Small Islands, it is found always that in neither case is the whole island involved, but that the quarrel is in each case between the Superior Side of one Island and the Inferior Side of the other.[2] Thus, while geographically each island is a separate entity, and while the inhabitants of each island form a distinct linguistic group, from the point of view of social organisation as seen in the conduct of warfare the homogeneity of each island is transcended by that of the two moieties into which the whole cultural area comprising the Small Islands and the adjacent Malekulan mainland is divided.

In this way, the two Sides into which each Small Island is split up are seen to be but aspects of a much larger whole. These Sides in all cases have the profoundest suspicion of one another, a suspicion which is at any time liable to break out into open hostility, and in this way resemble the two matrilineal moieties found in the dual organisation area immediately to the north and east in the islands of Oba and Maewo and parts of Santo, as well as the Banks Islands and the Torres Islands.[3] Indeed, as I have suggested elsewhere, it is probable that, though now patrilineal, the Sides found in the Small Islands were at some not very distant date matrilineal, representing the matrilineal moieties in the above-named districts, before the introduction of overt patrilineal descent into this part of Malekula.

However this may be, the hostility exists, and is very deep-rooted. When we consider that at least half the population of one Side of each Island takes its wives from the other Side of the same Island the hostility may seem to us very curious. It might at first sight appear due to the resentment felt by every Small Islander towards his wife's father, who exacts from his son-in-law a lifelong tribute in pigs from which there is no escape and which the native feels at the same time insupportable and inescapable, as in fact it is. If the father dies her brothers assume his

[1] The only exception being Peter-ihi on the Inferior Side of Vao.

[2] Thus in the historical account given on pp. 613-17 the Superior Side of Vao engages the Inferior Side of Atchin, neither party being assisted by the other Side of its own Island. Compare the similar segmentation among Australian tribes, among whom "The fights that formerly took place were not wars of one tribe with another, but of one part of one tribe with one part of another, or at times of one part of a tribe with another part of the same tribe. Thus there was no unity of the tribe in warfare." (Radcliffe-Brown, *Three Tribes of Western Australia*, JRAI, vol. XLIII, pp. 144-5.)

[3] See Codrington, 3, pp. 24 ff.; Rivers, 1, chapter II, etc. For similar hostile groups in Tanna, Lifu and other parts of Melanesia, see Wedgwood, 1, pp. 8, 9.

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rôle, so that the tribute due from the husband is, in fact, payable to his wife's whole clan. This feeling of unwilling serfdom to the wife's people may contribute to the sense of hostility between the two moieties, but this could do so only in the case of patrilineal communities such as exist in the Small Islands. It could not operate in a system of matrilineal moieties, since in these a man's wife's father belongs to the same moiety as himself. Yet the mutual hostility between the two Sides of each Small Island is of the same order precisely as that between the two matrilineal moieties in neighbouring islands.

Hostility between pairs of opposites extends throughout whole social organisation.

I venture to suggest, therefore, that something deeper than mere economic considerations lies beneath this widespread tension between intermarrying moieties. This question cannot be discussed without raising the problem of the origin of the moieties themselves. For the two Sides of the Island are not the only pairs of moieties that have to be considered. As we have seen in the chapter on Social Organisation,[1] the two Sides of the Island are themselves each split into sub-moieties, represented by one double-village on one Side and two double-villages on the other. Each of these sub-moieties is also liable at any moment to become hostile to the other, and what seems on the surface to be one homogeneous double-village will suddenly split up into two hostile camps. Each village is, moreover, yet further sub-divided into two "Sides of the Stone," which may, if any member of one offend a member of the other through some individual act of violence or by the revival of some old quarrel of a more communal nature, themselves suddenly become hostilely opposed.[2] The same tendency is seen even within the "Sides of the Stone," which, as we have seen, are still further divided into two so as to form four Quarters which, though essential to the whole village organisation, themselves on occasion literally take up the cudgels against one another. Finally, each Quarter is yet further split into two "Sides of the Lodge," between whom a smouldering opposition exists, ready to burst forth at any moment if any quarrel should arise between members of the two opposing Sides.

Progressive sub-division into moieties a spontaneous phenomenon.

Rivers has attempted to explain the hostility between the two main matrilineal moieties forming the dual organisation in the Banks Islands and Northern New Hebrides as being due to the fusion of two mutually hostile peoples who nevertheless managed to settle down together without either wishing to exterminate the other.[3] While by no means denying the fact of culture-contact, evidence for which abounds in every aspect

[1] Chapter III, pp. 57-8.
[2] Rivers, 1, vol. II, chapter XXXVIII.
[3] See p. 68.

1: Layard E-5 (1914-1915) 1942
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of Malekulan culture, I cannot bring myself to accept this as an explanation for the origin even of the two main moieties. Were this the case, we should expect at least that the two moieties should be named. But more often, as in the Small Islands, they are unnamed. Moreover, such an explanation could not possibly hold for the successive sub-divisions just mentioned. In fact, it will, I think, be evident from the above account that the tendency to sub-divide till the opposing groups are so small that no further sub-division is possible, far from being due to the chance fusion of two opposing groups, represents an organic process at work in the body politic itself, resembling the biological splitting of cells in living tissue.

While in the sphere of individual human relations the primary impulse towards this process lies clearly in the creative tension between the sexes, the same tension is reproduced on the sociological level in the relation between the two opposing moieties, each of which at the same time provides wives for the other. The two sexes must, however, become differentiated before they can unite. The same tendency to split and re-unite (for the hostile moieties are in each case dependent on one another for their very existence and for the performance of every ritual act) is seen also in a highly developed condition in class systems of kinship. It is found also in the realm of psychology, the health of each individual depending largely on the maintenance of a satisfactory tension between pairs of complementary opposites. If the tension becomes too one-sided this results in a psychotic condition upsetting the balance of the whole psyche in the same way that anything resembling a war of extermination between any of the two pairs of moieties on Vao would destroy the life of the whole island. There is thus strong presumptive evidence of a close analogy between the processes of biology, psychology and sociology. In each case the ideal pattern is the initial split followed by the re-union of complementary opposites under conditions of permanent and creative tension.

In the case of life on the Small Island of Vao the tension shows itself in the hostility above mentioned, and I trust that in the above brief discussion I may have succeeded in showing in some measure that the hostility so deplored by missionaries and others was, in fact, essential to the health and well-being of the race, so long as it was circumscribed in its relations to a comparatively closed area of small dimensions, and to a population, if we include all the Small Islands and adjacent mainland at the height of their prosperity before the advent of the white man, of not more than a few thousand. Now that the islands have been opened up to contact with the rest of the world, thus automatically destroying the circumscribed conditions under which alone such a primitive system can work, the problem has become very different, and the natives themselves have begun to deplore the internecine strife that prevents them from uniting against the common foe.